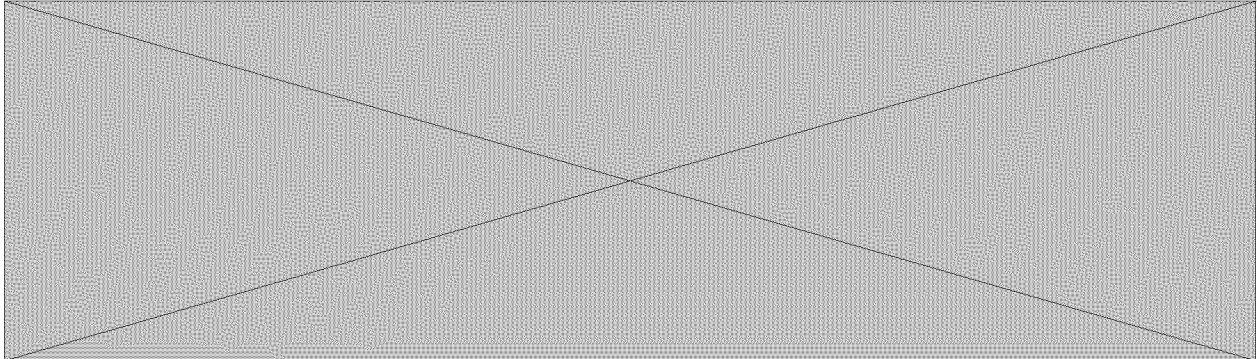


To: Smith, DavidW[Smith.DavidW@epa.gov]
From: Center for Biological Diversity
Sent: Thur 8/29/2013 8:32:00 PM
Subject: Endangered Earth: Remembering the Passenger Pigeon



No. 684, Aug. 29, 2013

The Last of the Passenger Pigeons: Only the Hills Will Know



Oregon Spotted Frog Proposed for Protection



2 Victories for Southwestern Wolves



250 Groups to EPA: Ban Frog-castrating Pesticide Atrazine



Oh Frack. They're Doing It in California's Waters Too?



Tell the Government: Protect Gunnison Sage Grouse Now -- *Take Action*



Navy Rejects Recommendations for Protecting Whales From Sonar



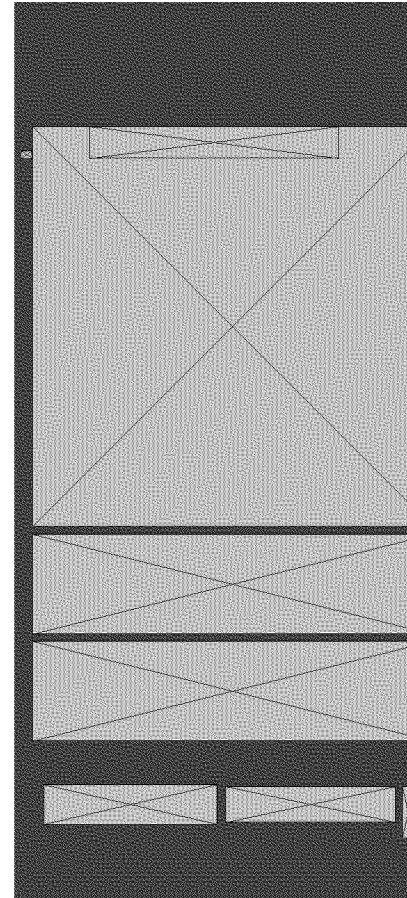
Oklahoma Senator Proudly Admits: Yep, I'm a Climate Denier



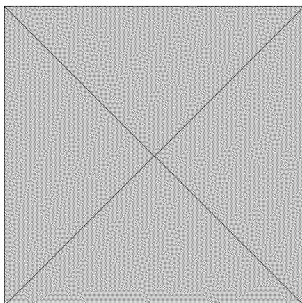
Frostpaw, Keystone and MSNBC's Rachel

Madow -- Watch Video

Wild & Weird: Abandoned Home Colonized by Beasts



The Last of the Passenger Pigeons: Only the Hills Will Know



This Sunday -- Sept. 1, 2013 -- will mark 99 years since the death of Martha, the world's last passenger pigeon. Martha died of old age in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo, four years after the deaths of her two remaining companions, the very last of the vast flocks of passenger pigeons that once darkened the sun.

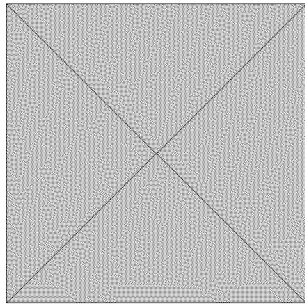
It's believed that in their heyday, before they were driven to extinction by the destruction of the forests they lived in and large-scale commercial hunting, *4 billion* of these elegant birds soared over the United States. Passenger pigeons were fast and beautiful flyers whose twisting columns of hundreds of thousands once decorated American skies, and their extinction inspired a new interest in protecting wild creatures.

In a 1947 speech paying tribute to the vanished species, Aldo Leopold said: "Men still live who, in their youth, remember pigeons. Trees still live who, in their youth, were shaken by

a living wind. But a decade hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know."

Visit the [Center for Biological Diversity's homepage tomorrow](#) for more on Martha and her lost kind.

Oregon Spotted Frog Proposed for Protection



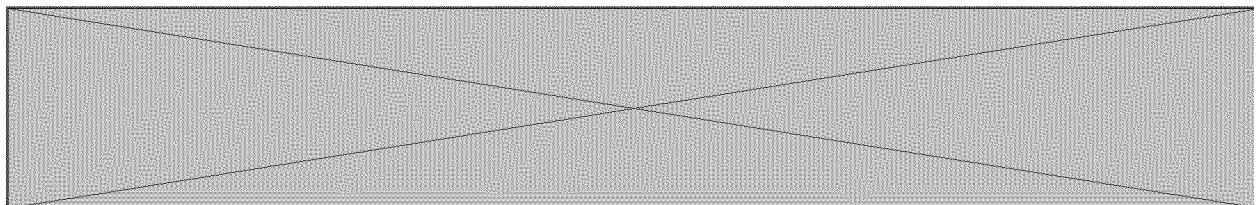
After more than 20 years as a candidate for federal protection, the Oregon spotted frog has a chance at the big time. On Wednesday the U.S. Fish and Wildlife proposed to protect this rare amphibian under the Endangered Species Act, along with 68,000 acres -- and 24 stream miles -- of federally protected "critical habitat" in Oregon and Washington.

The proposal is part of the Center's landmark settlement, reached in 2011, to speed up protection decisions for 757 imperiled plants and animals around the country. So far 103 species have been protected under our agreement, and another 60 have been proposed for protection.

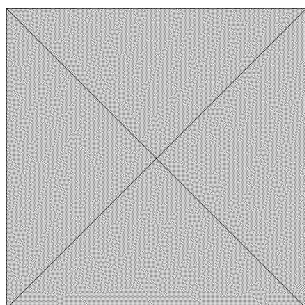
Help can't come soon enough for Oregon spotted frogs. Once abundant from British Columbia to California, they've disappeared from 90 percent of their former range, mostly because their wetland habitats are being destroyed.

Read more in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

2 Victories for Southwestern Wolves



250 Groups to EPA: Ban Frog-castrating Pesticide Atrazine

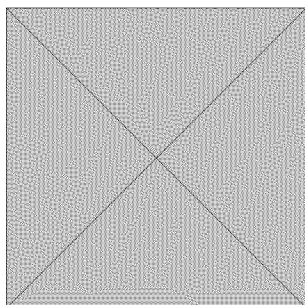


Two new legal settlements won by the Center will reap important benefits for the Southwest's struggling population of Mexican gray wolves.

One settlement requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to finalize a rule by January 2015 allowing the release of wolves from their captive-breeding pool into New Mexico and allowing them millions more acres to roam. Under the second agreement, the agency will drop plans to capture and incarcerate wild wolves migrating to the borderlands of these two states from Mexico.

The settlements are part of the Center's long fight to save and recover the Southwest's unique subspecies of gray wolves. These wolves -- genetically and geographically unique from all others -- are among the most endangered mammals in the United States, with just some 75 surviving in the wild.

Get more from [KRWG News](#).



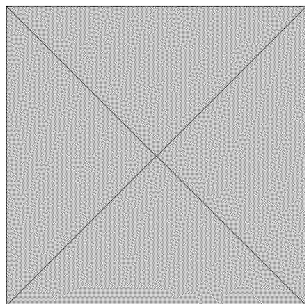
This week 250 public-interest groups called on the Environmental Protection Agency to ban atrazine, a pesticide known to chemically castrate frogs even at concentrations lower than what's now allowed in drinking water. The Center, one of the organizers of the effort, also sent comments from more than 38,000 supporters to bolster the letter to the EPA -- *thank you*.

Atrazine has been forbidden in the European Union for years, but as much as 40,000 tons of it are used in the United States annually: The U.S. Geological Survey study found traces of it in 75 percent of stream water and about 40 percent of all groundwater samples from agricultural areas tested. In people, atrazine exposure may be linked to increased risks of thyroid cancer, reproductive harm and birth defects.

"We need to get this dangerous pesticide out of our water supply before it does any more damage," said the Center's Collette Adkins Giese. "It's pretty obvious that a pesticide that chemically castrates male frogs is highly suspect for people too, as well as bad for other wildlife. It certainly shouldn't be showing up in our drinking water."

Read more in the [*Galloway Current*](#).

Oh Frack. They're Doing It in California's Waters Too?



Fracking isn't just happening in the grasslands and oak woodlands of California. Turns out it's in coastal waters too. A recent analysis by the Center found at least a dozen offshore wells that have been fracked in state waters -- apparently without the review that's required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

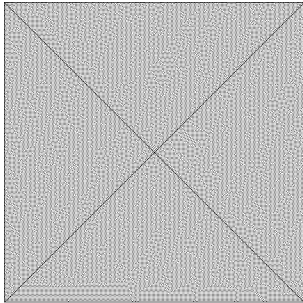
That's why the Center and allies recently sent a letter urging the California Coastal Commission to launch an investigation into the use of controversial fracking techniques in state waters, home to whales, seals, otters and countless other sea creatures. Records show offshore fracking in California employs nasty substances like methanol and other cancer-causing chemicals.

"Offshore fracking poses a deadly threat to California's fragile marine environment," said Miyoko Sakashita, the Center's Oceans director. "The best way for the Coastal Commission to protect our water and wildlife is to call an immediate time-out on offshore fracking."

Read more in the [*Santa Barbara Independent*](#).

Tell the Government: Protect Gunnison Sage Grouse Now -- *Take Action*

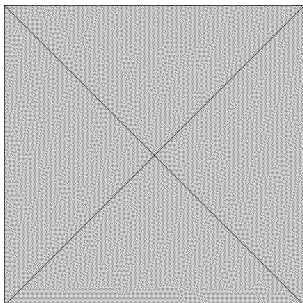
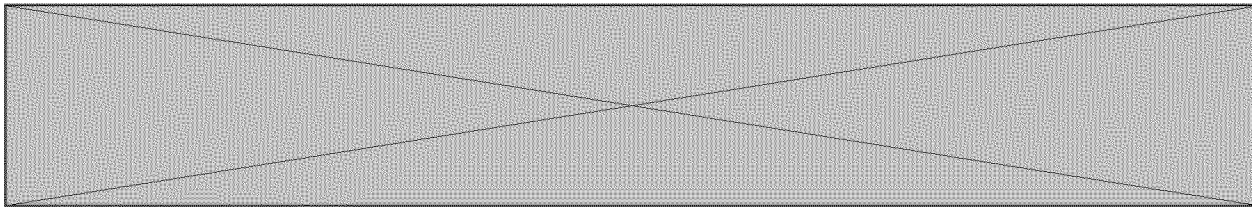
Navy Rejects Recommendations for Protecting Whales From Sonar



Since 2000 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized that Gunnison sage grouse need protection to escape extinction. These showy, comical birds with famously elaborate mating displays are some of the most endangered birds in the United States -- only about 4,000 breeding birds are left.

Under a settlement agreement with the Center, the Service finally proposed to protect the species in January -- along with 1.7 million acres of critical habitat. But the Service has fallen short of granting Gunnison sage grouse actual Endangered Species Act protection. In July it bowed to political pressure, agreeing to delay the final rule for six months and reopening the public comment period. Now the fate of Gunnison sage grouse hangs in the balance. Without legal protection, we could lose these charismatic creatures.

The new comment period closes Sept. 3 -- please, [take action now](#) to urge the Service to hold up its end of the bargain.



The U.S. Navy is rejecting recommendations by the California Coastal Commission intended to protect marine animals, including endangered blue whales, from military sonar. Earlier this year, the commission rejected the Navy's plan for sonar and explosive training along the Southern California coast that, according to the military's own estimates, would have killed 130 marine mammals and caused hearing loss in about 1,600.

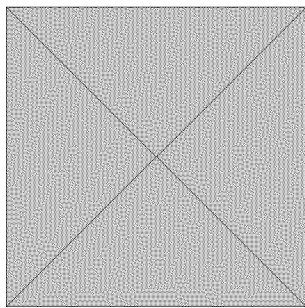
The commission offered several recommendations for the Navy, including a halt to training in the late summer when blue whale numbers tend to increase off the California coast and larger buffer protection zones in waters where marine mammals are present. The Navy

recently turned those recommendations down -- but said it would continue to work with the commission on the issue.

The Center continues to fight to protect California waters (and others) from these war games, which can have real and deadly effects on wildlife.

Read more about our work to [protect marine mammals from sonar, explosions and ocean noise](#).

Oklahoma Senator Proudly Admits: Yep, I'm a Climate Denier



Well, at least Sen. Tom Coburn (R.-Okla.) is honest about it. He's loud and proud that he denies global warming.

"I've read the basic scientific studies," Coburn says, "and a lot of it doesn't add up for me."

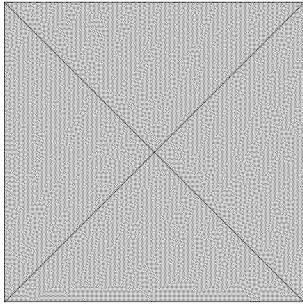
Hmm. What exactly doesn't add up? The record hot temperatures? The rising seas, epic droughts and disappearing glaciers? The staggering stack of peer-reviewed scientific reports?

Whatever. In Oklahoma, though, he's in good company with his political peers, especially Republican Sen. James Inhofe, who waxes indignant like no other when it comes to denying the stark reality of climate change.

Inhofe was the recipient of the Center's sixth annual Rubber Dodo award last year -- we called him a "stalwart human obstacle to federal action on this unprecedented global crisis." We may have to keep ol' Tom Coburn's name handy when nominations come around for this year's environmental booby prize.

Read more in [The Daily Caller](#).

Frostpaw, Keystone and MSNBC's Rachel Maddow -- *Watch Video*



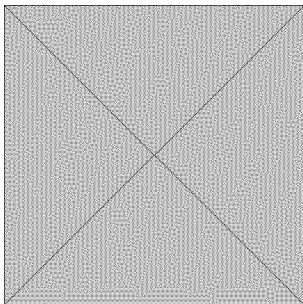
The media is still talking about Frostpaw the Polar Bear's visit to Martha's Vineyard earlier this month -- including MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, who recently ran a segment highlighting the Center mascot's time on the Vineyard. Maddow noted that everywhere President Obama seemed to be on his vacation, Frostpaw was there too, speaking out against the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Frostpaw story was also mentioned in several other prominent stories on President Obama's visit, including write-ups in *The Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post*.

Thanks to the Center's staff for making sure that Frostpaw -- and his message on rejecting Keystone -- went far from ignored in Massachusetts.

Check out this clip from [*The Rachel Maddow Show*](#).

Wild & Weird: Abandoned Home Colonized by Beasts

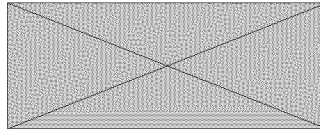
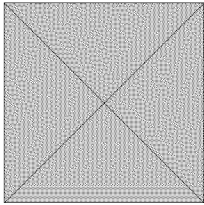


In the misty woods near Salo, Finland, sit six decaying cottages. Some years ago, their owner died in a fire. Now, as prizewinning photographer Kai Fagerström discovered in his photo series *The House in the Woods*, they seem to be occupied by memories... as well as numerous fur- and feather-bearing tenants.

Kai took his camera into the cottages and sat for hours at a time to catch the secretive owls, mice, foxes, squirrels and other critters that have moved in.

"Deserted buildings are so full of contradictions," he said in a *National Geographic* article. "I am fascinated by the way nature reclaims spaces that were, essentially, only ever on loan to humans."

Check out [Kai's photos](#) of wild animals making themselves at home in the abandoned cottages.



Kierán Suckling

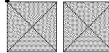
Executive Director

Photo credits: image from *The House in the Woods* by Kai Fagerström; passenger pigeon courtesy Flickr/cotinis; Oregon spotted frog by Gary Nafis; Mexican gray wolf by Robin Silver, Center for Biological Diversity; sea otter by Tom Crouse; Gunnison sage grouse courtesy Bureau of Land Management; blue whale courtesy NOAA; Senator Tom Coburn official staff photo; Frostpaw at Martha's Vineyard by Catherine Kilduff, Center for Biological Diversity; fox by Kai Fagerström.

This message was sent to bhaskins@biologicaldiversity.org.

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